

Vaguely Vietnamese Pork Tacos

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PORK:

1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 medium-size yellow onion, peeled and diced
8 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
2 tablespoons fresh ginger, peeled and minced
½ cup hoisin sauce
¼ cup fish sauce
1 tablespoon Sriracha sauce (*I used chili garlic sauce because that is what I keep in my fridge.*)
½ bone-in pork shoulder, skin and fat removed, approximately 5 pounds (*I used boneless cause I couldn't find bone-in*)
12 to 16 flour tortillas, warmed

FOR THE SLAW:

⅓ cup rice vinegar
2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
1 tablespoon sesame oil
2 tablespoons neutral oil, like peanut or grapeseed
1 teaspoon Sriracha sauce, or to taste
1 small green cabbage, cored and sliced thinly (*I used a Napa cabbage because the leaves are more tender and flavor not as strong*)
2 medium-size cucumbers, peeled and sliced into julienne
2 medium-size carrots, peeled and sliced into julienne
1 Asian pear, peeled, cored and sliced into julienne (*aka Apple Pear*)
½ bunch fresh cilantro, rinsed, dried and roughly chopped

PREPARATION

Prepare the pork (by removing skin and excess fat): Place a sauté pan over medium-high heat. After a minute or so, swirl in the sesame oil and then the onions, stirring to combine. Sauté for about 5 minutes, then add the garlic and continue to cook until the onions are soft and becoming translucent. Turn off the heat, stir in the ginger and set aside.

Add the hoisin sauce and the fish sauce to the pan, and stir to combine, loosening the mixture with a little less than half a cup of water. Add Sriracha sauce to taste.

SLOW COOKER METHOD - Put a few spoonfuls of the sauce in the bottom of a slow cooker, then nestle the pork on top of it. Pour the remaining sauce over the top of the pork. Cover the slow cooker and cook on low for 5 to 7 hours, or until the pork shreds easily with a fork. Remove the pork from the slow cooker and allow to rest for a few minutes.

DUTCH OVEN HIGH TEMP METHOD - Pre-heat your oven to 450 degrees. Rack placed in middle of your oven. Put a few spoonfuls of the sauce in the bottom of a dutch oven, then nestle the pork on top of it. Pour the remaining sauce over the top of the pork. Cover and place

in 450 degree hot oven for 45 minutes. Do not check on the pork at this point as you do not want to release the steam. Turn the heat down to 325 degrees and cook for an additional two (2) hours. You can now check the pork to see if it easily fork shreds. If so, its done. If not cook until it falls apart with a fork. When done, leave the lid off and let rest for a few minutes.

Meanwhile, make the slaw: Put the vinegar, ginger, sesame oil, neutral oil and sriracha sauce in a large bowl and whisk to combine. Add the cabbage, cucumbers, carrots and Asian pear and toss to combine.

Shred the pork with a pair of forks. Discard bones. Return the pulled pork to the slow cooker or dutch oven and stir to combine with the juices. This is when you taste test. Try the pork. It should have a distinct Asian flavor with the hoisin and ginger coming through. Add additional hoisin sauce and crushed ginger if needed. Stir and let the flavors meld.

Serve with the slaw and warmed tortillas, with the cilantro on the side.

Note: You can make the pork the day before and refrigerate. To reheat before serving place back in slow cooker and heat again. Or add about a 1/2 cup water to your dutch oven and blend into the pork. The additional moisture should keep it from sticking. Warm over medium high heat. DO NOT reheat in a microwave oven as it can burn quickly.

